IT HR CLASSIFICATION AND SELECTION PROJECT
MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)
December 28, 2005

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Question – When will these changes take place?

Answer – The classification proposal has an anticipated effective date of January 2007 and is dependent on the implementation of a new testing system by State Personnel Board (SPB).

Question – Will there be a website with information about the classification, examination and certification processes?

Answer – Yes. For now visit: http://www.cio.ca.gov/HRClassification.html

Question – Will the classification, examination, and certification processes be changed all at once or phased in?

Answer – The changes will be done concurrently: The new classes are anticipated to become effective in January of 2007. Current employees will not be reallocated to the new classes until the updated selection system is in place.   New examinations will be conducted after that and lists will be certified after the exams are completed

Question – Will my state service time be affected by movement to a new class?

Answer – No.

Question – Is legislation required to implement this project?

Answer – Yes - legislation must be enacted to support the Skills-Based Certification by SPB.

CLASSIFICATION QUESTIONS

Question – What does the new classification structure look like?

Answer – The proposal for the new classification structure, still at the conceptual level, can be viewed at http://www.cio.ca.gov/HRClassification.html:

Draft IT HR Classification and Selection – Classification Consolidation

Question – What new classification will I be placed in and who will decide my new classification?

Answer – You will be placed in the new class that corresponds to your current class. This will be explained later in the resolution section of the Board Item due to be completed summer 2006.   You can find an illustration of the old and new class structures with the corresponding movement patterns at Draft IT HR Classification and Selection Project Overview and Draft Classification and Selection Project - Classification Consolidation Chart

Question – Will all Information Technology classifications be converted to the new structure and when?

Answer – All IT classifications will be converted to the proposed new structure when it is adopted and becomes effective. The current plan anticipates a Board item being presented to the 5-member State Personnel Board with an effective date of January 2007. This provides time for classification conversion planning, development, testing and training all affected parties, including employees, IT managers, IT supervisors and department personnel staff.

Question – How will you determine how the skill sets apply to me?

Answer – A job analysis was conducted which identified the various tasks performed by each functional IT specialty today. The knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies needed to perform the tasks also were identified. Essentially, tasks were associated with the skills needed to perform the tasks. When the new classification structure is in place, jobs will be based on the functional tasks and the skills commensurate with the tasks. Your future position description may change to reflect the format and terminology of your new class.

Question – How will the classification structure handle changing technologies?

Answer – The proposed classes will reflect current technologies and work environments. As new technologies are developed and implemented by departments, the classification plan can be modified to adapt to the changing needs and new technologies.

Question – How will I move from my current classification to the new classification as part of the initial class conversion?

Answer- You will move by a resolution adopted by the SPB, contingent upon the new selection system being available. No examination or action will be required on your part.

Question – How will the skill sets, functional areas, and classifications be linked?

Answer – A job analysis was conducted that identified the various tasks performed by each functional IT specialty. The knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies needed to perform the tasks also were identified. Essentially, tasks were associated with the skills needed to perform the tasks. The new classifications were then developed based on the tasks, skills, knowledge and abilities identified by the job analysis.

Question – Will the new classification structure limit my ability to promote?

Answer – No. In fact, your promotional opportunities may be enhanced because specialty skills you possess may be more accurately evaluated in a skill-based examination and certification environment.

Question – Will I have to learn new skills to remain in my class?

Answer – No. To become competitive in promotional exams, though, you may need to develop your skills beyond their current level.

Question – What promotional opportunities exist in the new classification structure?

Answer – Depending on your current classification, education and experience, you will have promotional opportunities at least comparable to those of your current class. While the consolidated classification structure has reduced the number of IT classes, time-in-grade, education and experience requirements will remain similar to the existing classes.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Question – Do I have to take an examination to move to my new classification when the project is implemented?

Answer – No. You will move into the new class by State Personnel Board action.

Question – Is the examination process the only way to be certified? Can a software certification, such as a Microsoft MCSE, be substituted for passing an examination?

Answer – As is currently required, you must be successful in a State-administered examination to be considered for an appointment to a State job.

Question – Will the rule of three ranks be retained?

Answer – Yes, in the context of the *Skill-Based Certification Process*.

Question – How long will the lists be active?

Answer – Like today, your eligibility on a list can last from one to four years, depending on the needs of State service.

Question – Will testing be on a continuous basis?

Answer – Testing may be administered on a continuous or periodic basis, depending on the needs of State service.

Question – Will all examinations be centrally administered and by whom?

Answer – It is anticipated that open examinations will be administered by SPB, and promotional examinations will be administered by departments with IT positions.

Question – Will the State continue to administer open and promotional examinations?

Answer – Yes.

Question – Will I have to compete with outside candidates for a promotion?

Answer – As it is today, in some cases, you may be competing in an exam with non-State candidates for a class that would be considered a promotion for you. Such decisions are based on the availability of qualified state employees and hiring needs of the departments.

Question – How long must I remain in my new class before I can take a promotional exam?

Answer – This depends on the minimum qualifications of the promotional class, but the requirements will generally be the same as those for the current classes. Please refer to the specific class specification for this information.

Question – Can departments give departmental open and/or promotional examinations for state-wide classifications?

Answer – Departments may conduct promotional examinations. SPB will conduct open examinations.

Question – Can departments merge candidates from the open list with their own promotional lists?

Answer – No, the same as today.

Question – How will the new examination process test for soft skills?

Answer – The new examinations, as with the current exams, typically do not assess soft skills. The assessment of non-technical skills is generally done in the hiring phase of the selection process.

Question – How will I be notified of examinations?

Answer – Today, the SPB announces examinations on its website and departments also provide examination information. These processes will continue. This project includes a proposal for DPA and SPB to implement an HR Service Center / Portal that should more seamlessly provide classification, selection and certification information to all interested parties.

CERTIFICATION QUESTIONS

Question – How is the certification process different from what we do today?

Answer – Currently, you take an AISA exam, for example, you get on a list and then the top three ranks are certified as departments fill vacancies, regardless of the functional needs of the position being filled. Under the proposed certification process, employees will indicate what functional areas or skills they possess, examine for those skills and then their scores will be placed in a data bank for each functional area. Hiring departments will build position descriptions based on the specific functions and skills of a particular vacancy, and then request a certification list from SPB that reflects the requirements of the job. SPB will give departments a list of eligible candidates that match the skills required of the position.

Question – What is the benefit to adopting a skill-based certification process?

Answer – Hiring departments will receive eligible lists that more accurately satisfy job skill requirements. List eligibles will be considered for jobs that more closely match their experience and skills to the vacancy needs.

Question – What will happen if the skill-based certification legislation is not enacted?

Answer – The current certification process will remain as it is today.

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONS

Question – Will job vacancies continue to be posted on VPOS?

Answer – Yes.

Question – Will someone create templates for identifying the skill set requirements for a specific job?

Answer – The SPB and DPA are working with software providers to automate the job creation process. They will notify agencies when this information is available.

PAY QUESTIONS

Question – How will these changes impact my pay?

Answer – Your pay will not be affected by these changes.

Question – Will I lose any pay as a result of movement to my new class?

Answer – No.

ONE LAST QUESTION

Question – How do I find more information about this initiative / project?

Answer – As the project gets underway, the planning information and scheduling activities will continue to be posted at http: http://www.cio.ca.gov/HRClassification.html. Project Progress Reports will be published quarterly.
Review the current high level documents http://www.cio.ca.gov/HRClassification.html:

1. *Memorandum from State CIO:* <u>Memo from the State CIO</u>
2. *Project Overview:* <u>Draft IT HR Classification and Selection Project Overview</u>
3. *Classification:* <u>Draft Classification and Selection Project - Classification Consolidation Chart</u>
4. *IT Skills-Based Certification Process:* <u>Draft IT Skills-based Certification Process Chart</u>

Thank you for your interest and support of this important initiative.